

**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, May 17, 2005**

Pursuant to due call and notice the Civil Service Commission of the City of Dickinson met at City Hall on Tuesday, May 17, 2005 from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm

**Workshop by Bruce Lawson of Fox, Lawson and Associates**

**8:00 am: (Administrative Overview, Concerns and Direction)**

Members present were: Todd Tavis, Cal Kolling, Ray Ann Kilen and Bryan Personne  
Also present were: Dennis Johnson, Rhonda Dukart, Bill Reitmeier, Skip Rapp, Greg Sund, Tim Priebe, Stewart Stenberg, Ken Kussy, Tim Kessel, Chuck Rummel, Terry Wehner, Shawn Soehren and Cheryl Tollefson

Greg Sund gave those present a brief introduction why Fox, Lawson & Associates were giving the workshop today. Sund also gave the history as to why the City had chosen Fox, Lawson & Associates, stating prior to Fox, Lawson & Associates there had been two failed studies and the City had withdrawn from the studies prior to their completion. Sund stated a time-in-grade system of about 40 grades was in place, with only half of the grades being used prior to the current time-in-grade system. Sund stated when he was hired he was asked to develop a Human Resource Manual and to complete a compensation study. Fox, Lawson & Associates was chosen as the study as other cities in the area were using the system.

Bruce Lawson introduced himself stating Fox, Lawson & Associates has two offices, one in Phoenix, AZ and one in St. Paul, MN. Lawson stated he will explain the methodology of the Fox, Lawson & Associates system. Lawson also gave a run down of the day's events.

In the presentation Lawson referenced three federal laws, they are the Equal Pay Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). All three of the laws play a part in the essential duties and their classifications. Lawson also stated for a duty to be considered an essential duty is must be performed 5 -10% of the time.

Lawson gave a PowerPoint presentation on "The Decision Band™ Method". The presentation included job evaluation, The Decision Band™ Method, and the key DBM concepts. A hardcopy of the PowerPoint minutes are available upon request.

Lawson stated when sending a job description for evaluation they need background or context information. If they're sent only comparable job descriptions the on to be reviewed will be taken at face value. It was recommended to give as much information necessary to make an informed decision. Lawson also stated supervision doesn't always add value to the job description. The job description is graded on the highest rated essential duty.

Todd Tavis asked about annual maintenance and if market is included. Bruce Lawson stated the class structure and the job descriptions need to be reviewed annually to verify they are current. As for market Lawson stated an extensive pay survey does not need to be done annually. A full pay study shouldn't need to be done more often than every three to four years. Dennis Johnson state he believes the City is current with the market for the A, B & C grades, but feels the City is below market for the upper levels.

Tavis stated the City had taken the original banding but added in the time-in-grade component, but it doesn't seem to be working and asked why. Lawson stated the Decision Band Method (DBM) is irrelevant with the pay. Lawson stated the two are completely different issues.

It was questioned how to define above standard performance. Lawson stated the person was hired to do a certain job, if there is above standard performance the City could use performance pay, but it would need to be decided what exactly above standard performance is.

The steps in the time-in-grade among the grades were mentioned regarding fewer steps for the lower grades and more for the upper grades. Bruce Lawson stated this is normal. When the position is higher in the scale there is a longer learning curve to be more proficient.

It was asked how many and how detailed the essential duties should be in a job description. Lawson stated only essential duties or those done on a regular basis should be listed. Lawson stated anything more than that is a waste of time. Lawson said a job description should be one to two pages in length.

Lawson stated DBM ratings should be applied for all job descriptions as it has internal value only. Lawson stated it may be appropriate to have separate pay scales for different areas, such as one for the police department, the fire department and as a general pay scale. Lawson also state the way the pay is delivered (i.e. time-in-grade) is different than the job classification.

**10:00 am and 3:00 pm: (Employee Presentations – PowerPoint, Discussion & Q/A)**

Two sessions were held for employees to attend. Bruce Lawson gave his PowerPoint presentation at both employee sessions. This presentation was the same one presented for the Civil Service Commission, City Commission, Administration and Department Heads. Following the presentation Bruce Lawson opened the session for employees to ask questions. During the morning session Bruce Lawson answered many job specific questions for both the Communication Specialist and the Public Works Specialist. During the afternoon session there were presentation clarification questions.

**1:30 pm: (Managing the HR Function)**

During the morning employee session the Communication Specialist job description was questioned several times. Bruce was given a copy of the current job description on file.

Bruce Lawson stated again, job descriptions should be one to two pages in length with no more than nine essential duties. Regarding the essential duties, Lawson stated the focus needs to be on what is done most of the time only. Lawson stated essential duties are those are used for posting a help wanted advertisement listing what the applicant would be doing.

Lawson stated employees need to know, a reclassification is not the way to get more money. A reclassification is for a large change in the essential duties. The wage market does need to be re-visited regularly though, every three to five years.

It was questioned how an employee would move through the time-in-grade schedule. Lawson stated the time-in-grade has nothing to do with the DBM and is not a part of the Fox, Lawson & Associates system.

Lawson told Administration and Civil Service members present there needs to be a process for the review. Lawson suggested defining a job family schedule. Once there is a schedule for review a questionnaire should be completed by employees and supervisors asking what the employee is currently doing (essential duties). The questionnaire answers should then be compared to the current job description to confirm the grade is still appropriate.

Bruce Lawson stated many clients use a similar process and proceeded to go through that process. The process is as follows: Once per year, normally in November, the employee, if they think the job has change in the last 12 months, needs to explain what is different now than the beginning of the year (examples: new work or a department restructure); the data is then submitted to the human resource department for review and a decision made. Lawson used the analogy of the job description/classification review to that of an annual physical.

The Communication Specialist position was discussed regarding why it was classified as an A13 or a grade 2 when another city has it graded higher. Lawson stated after reviewing the description the reason for the grading is last sentence in essential duty number one which states: "Any procedure clarification will be forwarded to the Public Safety Support Supervisor or if not available the Shift Commander." Lawson stated this makes the essential duty "A" level work.

Tavis questioned a 25% change in a job and if it qualifies for a reclassification. Lawson stated only if the type/level of work changes.

Lawson stated there needs to be checks and balances with the review process. Supervisors or managers need to be involved in the reviews to confirm what the employee says he/she is doing.

When completing a review the duties need to be checked against those brought to the table. Lawson said classify the work to pay the people. Lawson reiterated not to "play" with the classifications if the pay scale is too rigid.

Lawson closed the managing the HR function session with communication is key to having the employees support the system.

**5:00 pm: (Recap and Future Direction)**

Prior to the workshop, Bruce Lawson was given a list of questions asked by employees and department heads. Lawson quickly went through each confirming that he had answered all of the questions.

Through discussion earlier in the day Lawson was told the duties of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). In the recap session he stated it needs to be decided what the role of the Civil Service is. Lawson stated in other municipalities it is a commission to approve or disapprove, but not to do the work of a human resource department. Lawson indicated for the CSC to be objective they cannot be involved with the day to day work. Lawson stated he feels staff internally could do the daily functions the CSC is doing and ask for their approval. Lawson recommended this be looked into with the way current ordinance is written.

Dennis Johnson asked how the employee session went. Lawson explained he gave the employees the same presentation as the Commissions received this morning. Lawson stated there was good discussion at the morning session. Lawson feels the employees left with a better understanding of the DBM, but their main focus was on pay.

Rhonda Dukart questioned where and how the Commission would begin stepping out of the day to day function. As stated before, Lawson stated the CSC needs to review what their role is to be. Lawson also suggested gaining the employees trust with the human resource department by having the CSC delegate the day to day duties to the hr department for a short time with the hr department requesting approval for actions taken. After a short time the new process should be reviewed, if it's working delegate again for a longer period and eventually change ordinance to reflect the changes. Dukart feels the timing is good to begin changing the role of the CSC. Ray Ann Kilen stated CSC is to be a fairness board and no one is advocating the removal of the CSC.

Dennis Johnson commented there is no one to blame for how things are done now. Johnson feels the City was not organized effectively in the past, which lead to the distrust by employees. Johnson feel it was a good move to abandon the portfolio system once used as it may have been part of the problem.

Bruce Lawson stated he doesn't feel all changes to job descriptions need to be sent to Fox, Lawson and Associates for approval. Lawson stated he's willing to assist to alleviate credibility issues, but the City must take responsibility for the system.

Cal Kolling stated no maintenance has been done with the Fox, Lawson and Associates system since implementation. Kolling asked how the City could improve the way it uses the system. Lawson stated with the reclassifications, have a questionnaire completed by the employee as to why there was a change in duties. Lawson also stated management needs to be involved, signing off the duties in fact did change. Kolling questioned if a

City wide study needed to be completed to put the system back on track. Lawson stated it wasn't necessary to complete another City wide study. Lawson indicated a schedule of the different job classifications should be developed and utilized until all descriptions have been reviewed. Once this is complete the City could allow for reclassifications on an annual basis.

Todd Tavis questioned if there was a template to follow when writing job descriptions as some of the City's have gotten quite wordy. Lawson stated there was a general or basic template in the manual given to the City when the study was done. Greg Sund questioned if the essential duties should be listed as if writing a job advertisement. Lawson stated yes, but there will be some exceptions.

Kilen questioned the ability to use several pay plans. Lawson stated it is possible, the goal with them would be to confirm they meet the City's strategic objectives. Johnson stated the employees feel it is unfair to use separate pay plans, however Johnson stated he agrees with Lawson to do this. Lawson reminded the City to take small steps when implementing any changes.

Sund questioned if 25 job classifications/descriptions was appropriate for the size of the organization. Lawson answered it is appropriate, stating the need to focus on the type and level of the work.

Tavis commented to Bruce Lawson you know where the City's at with the plan currently and asked for direct steps to continue using the Fox, Lawson and Associates system after not having done the proper maintenance. Lawson stated again to change the current duties of the CSC, to create a fully laid out policy to for maintaining the system and then implement the plan annually.

Discussion led to the time-in-grade system and how compensation is delivered. Johnson stated with the low trust culture at the time of implementation of the Fox, Lawson and Associates system, it wasn't readily accepted to use a pay for performance system so the time-in-grade scale was implemented with the Fox, Lawson and Associates system. Tim Kessel stated in regards to the time-in-grade system that there may be an evolution in the future to employees wanting a pay for performance system rather than the time-in-grade. Kessel feels this may come about with employees reaching the cap within the time-in-grade scale. Ken Kussy agreed employees may start wanting a combination of both.

Johnson stated he's not sure if it's right or wrong, but at TMI the feel is it's better for the company to focus on the employee's success rather than their happiness. Kessel commented if an employee isn't happy they should be encouraged to find something that makes them happy. Lawson concurred the employer can't accept parental control.

Discussion of whether or employees realize the cost of the benefits took place. It was suggested employees receive an annual statement showing them how much the benefits they receive truly are worth.

Lawson closed the day reminding the City Commission, Civil Service Commission, Administration and Department Heads to keep things as simple as possible, but to figure out where the City needs to be or go. Lawson stated not to make rash decisions as it will help in the long term with employee trust. Lawson also told those present, the process is going to take time and that he didn't mean weeks or months, but years, which create less disruption.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

OFFICAL MINUTES PREPARED BY:

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Kristi Broer, Administrative Assistant

Approved: July 26, 2005